

expert employees and have access to private expertise to accomplish the purposes of the Act.

To do so, OMHAR must have or obtain expertise and skills in real estate development, in management and finance, in financial and market analysis, in auditing, evaluation and oversight, and in accounting and taxation. The conferees direct the Secretary to ensure that such expertise and skills are available to OMHAR. The Act gives the Secretary the flexibility to obtain competent personnel from other agencies and to contract for expert services. However, the conferees expect that these avenues, and the existing Departmental staff, may not be sufficient to obtain the necessary skills. Therefore, the conferees expect that the Secretary may be required to hire new employees for OMHAR to perform effectively.

SPECIAL CONSULTATION PROCEDURES

Section 522 of the Act requires the Department to develop final regulations within twelve months from the date of enactment. During that period, the Department is to collect and respond to numerous public comments on several issues. However, in order to focus special attention on two critical issues, the conferees have included special requirements for the Department to seek comment through three public fora at which specified parties may make recommendations on:

- the selection process for participating administrative entities; and
- the mandatory renewal of certain contracts with project-based assistance.

Regarding the selection of participating administrative entities, the conferees stated previously that entities fully qualified shall be selected to undertake the complex task of restructuring the debt and assistance for multifamily projects. To this end, the selection criteria are intended to assure competent and efficient participants. The conferees urge the Department to use the fora to elicit a wide range of concerns and recommendations from affected parties as to implementing the selection process to accomplish this end.

Section 522 also directs the Department to solicit views on how to implement the requirements that section 8 assistance be renewed as project-based assistance for tight markets (section 515(c)(1)(A)) and when "a predominant number" of the units are occupied by elderly and/or disabled families (section 515(c)(1)(B)). The conferees believe it would be helpful if interested parties address the extent to which a project must be occupied by elderly and/or disabled persons to qualify for mandatory renewal, particularly rural projects which house elderly and disabled persons, in light of the factors that must be assessed in the rental assistance assessment plan.

CONFERENCE TOTAL—WITH COMPARISONS

The total new budget (obligational) authority for the fiscal year 1998 recommended by the committee of conference, with comparisons to the fiscal year 1997 amount, the 1998 budget estimates, and the House and Senate bills for 1998 follow:

New budget (obligational) authority, fiscal year 1997	\$85,895,503,442
Budget estimates of new (obligational) authority, fiscal year 1998	90,990,338,000
House bill, fiscal year 1998	91,461,593,000
Senate bill, fiscal year 1998	90,367,535,000
Conference agreement, fiscal year 1998	90,735,430,000
Conference agreement compared with:	
New budget (obligational) authority, fiscal year 1997	+4,839,926,558

Budget estimates of new (obligational) authority, fiscal year 1998	—254,908,000
House bill, fiscal year 1998	—726,163,000
Senate bill, fiscal year 1998	+367,895,000

JERRY LEWIS,
TOM DELAY,
JAMES T. WALSH,
DAVE HOBSON,
JOE KNOLLENBERG,
R.P. FRELINGHUYSEN,
ROGER F. WICKER,
BOB LIVINGSTON,
LOUIS STOKES,
ALAN B. MOLLOHAN,
MARCY KAPTUR,
CARRIE P. MEEK,
DAVID E. PRICE,
DAVE OBEY,

Managers on the Part of the House.

CHRISTOPHER S. BOND,
CONRAD BURNS,
TED STEVENS,
RICHARD SHELBY,
BEN NIGHTHORSE
CAMPBELL,
LARRY E. CRAIG,
THAD COCHRAN,
BARBARA A. MIKULSKI,
PATRICK J. LEAHY,
FRANK R. LAUTENBERG,
TOM HARKIN,
BARBARA BOXER,
ROBERT C. BYRD,

Managers on the Part of the Senate.

REPORT ON H.R. 2607, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 1998

Mr. LIVINGSTON, from the Committee on appropriations, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 105-298) on the bill (H.R. 2607) making appropriations for the government of the District of Columbia and other activities chargeable in whole or in part against the revenues of said District for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1998, and for other purposes, which was referred to the Union Calendar and ordered to be printed.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. All points of order are reserved on the bill.

COMMUNICATION FROM CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the chairman of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, which was read and, without objection, referred to the Committee on Appropriations.

COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE, CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

Washington, DC, September 29, 1997.

Hon. NEWT GINGRICH,
Speaker of the House, U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Enclosed are copies of resolutions adopted on September 24, 1997 by the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. Copies of the resolutions are being transmitted to the Department of the Army.

With kind personal regards, I am

Sincerely,

BUD SHUSTER,
Chairman.

There was no objection.

DAVIS-BACON FRAUD IN OKLAHOMA

(Mr. BALLENGER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BALLENGER. Madam Speaker, I am sure you have heard by now about the Davis-Bacon fraud that was going on Oklahoma. After long investigations by the Oklahoma Department of Labor, the FBI indicted and a Federal judge convicted a labor union official for falsely submitting wage information to inflate wage rates on Federal projects. Last week an Oklahoma Federal judge upheld a conviction and denied the motion for a new trial or acquittal on 14 felony charges. The union official currently awaits sentencing.

The investigation by the Oklahoma Department of Labor uncovered just how easy it is to manipulate the system. The investigation uncovered inflated numbers of employees and inflated wage rates on projects that were never built. Unfortunately, this false wage information enormously skewed data that sets wages on Federal projects. This illustrates the poor quality of the Federal wage survey process and how antiquated this program really is.

I would like to close by thanking the officials who were involved in the investigation and who persisted on following through to the end results, even if the results sadly confirm the fact that the Davis-Bacon invites fraud and abuse.

THE IRS

(Mr. TRAFICANT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. TRAFICANT. Madam Speaker, asking the Congress to stay out of it, the IRS is promising to reform themselves. Like a wounded TV evangelist, the IRS is begging the American people for forgiveness. They said, "This time we really mean it. Cross our hearts, hope to die."

Spare me, Mr. Speaker. Who is kidding whom? Allowing the IRS to reform themselves would be like allowing Jeffrey Dahmer to head up the Boy Scouts. The IRS is guilty, guilty, guilty, and every time they get caught with their fingers in our 1040's, they plead for forgiveness.

Enough is enough. I say it is time to kick these computer cowboys right up their hard drives. Pass H.R. 367 and change the burden of proof in a civil tax case. That will get it done.

With that, I yield back all those crocodile tears at the Internal Revenue Service.